

Czechoslovakia

## PRAGUE HONORS MARTYRED STUDENT

Names Square for Protester  
Fatally Burned in 1969

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PRAGUE, Jan. 16 — In an act as symbolic as Jan Palach's self-immolation 21 years ago, the people of Prague today renamed Red Army Square for the student who burned himself to death to protest what the Soviet occupation in 1968 had done to his country.

A crowd of 10,000, most of them students from nearby Charles University, where Palach was a second-year student at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, gathered to hear President Vaclav Havel and other Government officials pay him official homage as a martyr for the first time since he set himself on fire in Wenceslas Square on Jan. 16, 1969.

"For the first time since his funeral, we are meeting freely and publicly and acknowledging that he gave his life in protest against the invasion by the armies of the Warsaw Pact," said Frantisek Cerny, a new dean elected by students and professors after widespread protests brought down the hard-line Communist Government, and the university administrators who served it, late last year.

"Jan Palach, your nation has awakened," said Milan Adam, the new Education Minister. "Thanks to the students, the successors of Jan Palach, we have raised ourselves to a new life."

### 'I Wanted to Awaken People'

The floral red star that occupied the center of the square, on the banks of the Vltava River beneath the Prague Castle, had been scraped up and carted away. But Mr. Cerny said that a plaque in memory of the Red Army soldiers who gave their lives there when they liberated Prague from Nazi occupation in May 1945 would also find a place on Jan Palach Square.

Tonight national television broadcast a half-hour documentary, including fragments remarks made by Jan Palach on his deathbed. "I wanted to awaken people," he said, according to the remarks, broadcast with emotional scenes of the mass funeral and huge street demonstrations that followed his death. Then, Soviet tanks and troops



Agence France-Presse

The people of Prague yesterday renamed Red Army Square for the student who burned himself to death to protest what the Soviet occupation in 1968 had

done to his country. A death mask of Jan Palach, which will be placed on the facade of nearby Charles University, was unveiled yesterday.

were still in the streets. But two decades of "normalization" by the Communist police state had not yet made people afraid to protest. Twenty years later, even fear was not enough to keep it from crumbling.

A year ago, days of demonstrations marking the 20th anniversary of the martyred student's defiant act were repressed with water cannons, tear gas and police beatings. Mr. Havel was among those who laid flowers at the Wenceslas Square memorial where the student had set fire to himself, and paid for it with his last prison term, which lasted until the spring.

"I had a feeling then that after 20 years, the great Jan Palach's ultimate sacrifice was beginning to take on its full meaning," he said at Palach Square today in a brief speech, only two and a half weeks after becoming Czechoslovakia's President.

### Strike Ends After Election

"Now I'm certain of it," he said. "Before us is something that Palach dreamed of. It depends on us whether it will be fulfilled."

That, he did not need to tell the crowd, was freedom. "Today it's im-

## A year ago, the anniversary was marked with tear gas and beatings.

possible to believe that Jan Palach's death was anything but a sacrifice," said Radim Palous, who spoke on the square this spring-like afternoon as a representative of Mr. Havel's Civic Forum democratic movement. "He wanted to be a human torch — his was a statement in opposition to the sense that nothing could be done. By his sacrifice, Jan Palach upheld the honor of a demoralized society."

"I did not go to last year's demonstration," said Veronica Krselova, a fourth-year student of English literature who was on the square. "A year ago, it was literally a choice between being able to study and taking part in a demonstration. My boyfriend went, and was arrested, but he was a worker — he had nothing to lose."

Students began a general strike Nov. 17 after the police brutally repressed demonstrators demanding more democracy. They did not end it until after Mr. Havel was elected President on Dec. 29.

Two leaders of the group that emerged from the strike, the Independent Student Union, received a \$10,000 Jan Palach Prize today from the International Committee for Support of Charter 77, the Czechoslovak human-rights group started by Mr. Havel and others here in 1977. The French actor Yves Montand, representing the international committee, presented the prize.

Jan Palach was buried in Olsanske Cemetery six days after he died on Jan. 19, 1969. But the authorities had his remains exhumed and cremated in 1973 in a vain attempt to keep his grave from becoming a place of pilgrimage. In March 1974, his ashes were buried in his home village of Vsetaty, northwest of the capital.

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